

PRESS ROOM

New Scam Targeting Military Spouses

National Headquarters
2025 E Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
www.redcross.org

Contact: Devorah Goldberg
Phone: (202) 303-4461
goldburgd@usa.redcross.org

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, May 29, 2007 — The American Red Cross has learned about a new scam targeting military families. This scam takes the form of false information to military families as described below:

The caller (young-sounding, American accent) calls a military spouse and identifies herself as a representative from the Red Cross. The caller states that the spouse's husband (not identified by name) was hurt while on duty in Iraq and was med-evacuated to a hospital in Germany. The caller stated they couldn't start treatment until paperwork was accomplished, and that in order to start the paperwork they needed the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth. In this case, the spouse was quick to catch on and she did not provide any information to the caller.

The American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact military members/dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant channels. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown/unverified individuals, to include confirmation that your spouse is deployed.

It is a federal crime, punishable by up to 5 years in prison, for a person to falsely or fraudulently pretend to be a member of, or an agent for, the American National Red Cross for the purpose of soliciting, collecting, or receiving money or material.

In addition, American Red Cross representatives will contact military members/dependents directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by your family. The Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to family members. The Department of Defense will contact families directly if their military member has been injured. Should any military family member receive such a call, they are urged to report it to their local Family Readiness Group or Military Personnel Flight.

The American Red Cross ensures that the American people are in touch with their family members serving in the United States military by operating a communications network that is open 24-hours, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year. Through a network of employees and volunteers at Red Cross national that link families during emergencies, access to emergency financial assistance, confidential counseling, community support headquarters, local chapters, on military installations, and deployed with troops, the Red Cross offers a broad range of services. Among these services, the Red Cross provides communications for families left behind, assistance to veterans, and preparedness courses for military personnel and their families

The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year, almost a million volunteers and 35,000 employees helped victims of almost 75,000 disasters; taught lifesaving skills to millions; and helped U.S. service members separated from their families stay connected. Almost 4 million people gave blood through the Red Cross, the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The American Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work.